

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MANILA 2664

NODIS/CHEROKEE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, RP, US

SUBJECT: EXCHANGE OF CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN PRESIDENTS
FORD AND MARCOS

1. DURING PRESIDENT FORD'S VISIT TO MANILA IN DECEMBER OF
LAST YEAR, HE ARRANGED WITH PRESIDENT MARCOS THAT THE TWO
CHIEFS OF STATE SHOULD OCCASIONALLY EXCHANGE CORRESPONDENCE
ON ISSUES OF MUTUAL INTEREST. THE ARRANGEMENT WAS COINED
IN SUCH TERMS THAT IT IS INCUMBENT ON PRESIDENT FORD TO
INITIATE THE CORRESPONDENCE.

2. THE ASEAN SUMMIT MEETING APPARS TO CONSTITUTE AN
APPROPRIATE OCCASION FOR AN OPENING FORAY IN THIS EXCHANGE
OF STALEY CORRESPONDENCE. I HAVE PREPARED A DRAFT LETTER
WHICH IS INCORPORATED AS PARAGRAPH THREE OF THIS CABLE.
IF THE PRESIDENT APPROVES THIS PROPOSAL, PLEASE CABLE THE
EXACT TEXT FOR MY EARLIEST DELIVERY TO PRESIDENT MARCOS.
ONE OF THE FEATURES OF THE CORRESPONDENCE ARRANGEMENT
BETWEEN THE TWO PRESIDENTS WAS THAT THE MESSAGES IN BOTH
DIRECTIONS WOULD BE PASSED THROUGH THIS EMBASSY.

3. THE PROPOSED TEXT IS AS FOLLOWS:

"DEAR MR. PRESIDENT:

"NOW THAT YOU AND THE OTHER ASEAN HEADS OF GOVERNMENT
HAVE SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED YOUR FIRST SUMMIT MEETING, IT
IS INCUMBENT ON THOSE OF US WHO WISH YOU WELL TO EXAMINE
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THE WAYS IN WHICH WE CAN BEST ASSIST YOU TO ACHIEVE YOUR

COMMON OBJECTIVES. I AM SENSITIVE TO THE FACT THAT THE UNITED STATES, IN FACING THIS ISSUE, MUST MOVE WITH PARTICULAR CARE SO THAT OUR ACTIONS AND OUR MOTIVES WILL NOT BE MISCONSTRUED.

"AS I TOLD YOU WHEN I VISITED MANILA LAST DECEMBER, I WOULD LIKE, FROM TIME TO TIME, TO SEEK YOUR COUNSEL ON MATTERS SUCH AS THIS. BECAUSE THE PHILIPPINES IS OUR OLDEST ALLY IN ASIA AND BECAUSE YOU, PERSONALLY, HAVE HAD SO MUCH EXPERIENCE IN DEALING WITH AMERICANS, I BELIEVE YOU CAN UNDERSTAND BETTER THAN OTHERS THE PROBLEMS WE CONFRONT.

"ESSENTIALLY, WE WISH TO MOVE IN SUCH A WAY THAT WE WILL ENHANCE THE PROSPECTS FOR ASEAN SUCCESS, WHILE, AT THE SAME TIME, AVOIDING SUCH AN ENTHUSIASTIC EMBRACE THAT IT MAY PROVE EMBARRASSING TO THE MEMBER STATES. THERE HAVE ALREADY BEEN ACCUSATIONS, ESPECIALLY FROM HANOI, THAT ASEAN IS A 'CREATURE OF THE UNITED STATES'. WHILE YOU AND I KNOW THE ABSURDITY OF SUCH ALLEGATIONS, THERE MAY BE OTHERS IN QUARTERS OF INTEREST TO ASEAN WHO WOULD BE DECEIVED BY SUCH MISCHIEVOUS PROPOGANDA.

"THEREFORE, BEFORE I INITIATE ANY STEPS WITH RESPECT TO ASEAN, I WOULD APPRECIATE YOUR CANDID VIEWS ON THE BEST WAY FOR US TO PROCEED. THERE HAVE, FOR EXAMPLE, BEEN SUGGESTIONS THAT THE UNITED STATES AND ASEAN SHOULD FORMALLY INITIATE ECONOMIC CONSULTATIONS IN MUCH THE SAME WAY AS THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY AND ASEAN HAVE DONE. THERE HAVE BEEN OTHER SUGGESTIONS WHICH WOULD ENTAIL PUBLIC STATEMENTS OF SUPPORT AND ENDORSEMENT BY THE UNITED STATES FOR POSITIONS ESPOUSED BY ASEAN. THERE MAY BE STILL FURTHER SUGGESTIONS WHICH HAVE NOT YET BEEN BROUGHT TO MY ATTENTION.

"PLEASE GIVE ME YOUR ADVICE AND JUDGMENT, WHICH I WILL FIND VALUABLE AND WHICH I SHALL TREAT WITH CONFIDENTIALITY AND DISCRETION.

"WITH WARMEST PERSONAL REGARDS TO YOU AND MRS. MARCOS, I AM

"SINCERELY.

"GERALD FORD"

SULLIVAN

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